



Mr. Lewis's

S E R M O N

At the *ORDINATION* of

Mr. Joseph Fish,

December 27th. 1732.



SOUND

+



S
I

In the

M

Wa

By

Who

GO

the

un

an

an

N.L.

The Good Minister.

^A S E R M O N

Preach'd at **Stonington**,
in the Colony of **CONNECTICUT**,

December 27th 1732.

When the Reverend

Mr. JOSEPH FISH

Was Ordained Pastor of a Church there;

By *Daniel Lewis*, V. D. M.

And Pastor of the Church in *Pembroke*.

Acts xi. 23, 24.

*Who when he came, and had seen the Grace of
GOD, was Glad, and Exhorted them all,
that with purpose of heart they would cleave
unto the LORD : For he was a Good Man,
and full of the HOLY GHOST, and of Faith ;
and much People were added unto the LORD.*

N. LONDON : Printed & Sold by *T. Green*.

MDCCXXXIII.



+++++

IT is
Kin
gre
other, v
casts us
larions
terfive
End is b
serv'd, t
at once,
to Mank
'em, *tha*
pose for
justly be
their Te
vation o
Rom. x.
that p
dings of
And
racter of
anointe
rance to
Represen
His Tern
to be rec
How fit
tain'd a
red Offi
both in
of God
Qualific
that wh
ture, (v
which is
as necess

To the READER.

IT is one great Instance & Evidence of GOD's Kindness to *humane Nature*, that He has (agreeable to that state of Dependance on one another, which our Make & Circumstances, naturally casts us into) appointed multifarious Offices & Relations among Men, for the greater and more extensive Good of the whole *Species*. And as this End is by no Office in the World, more eminently serv'd, than it is by the *Gospel Ministry*, this, may at once, give us some view of the divine Compassion to Mankind, and both recommend and endear unto 'em, *that Order of Men*, who are appointed on purpose for the care of their Souls: which, may very justly be an Argument with all, whose *Eyes behold their Teachers*, to welcome them with the like elevation of Spirit and Language, which is express'd in Rom. x. 15. — *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

And since they do bear the visible Image & Character of Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, (who was anointed to preach the Gospel to the Poor, & Deliverance to the Captives) in their being His authorized Representatives and Ambassadors, sent to proclaim His Terms of Peace, to beseech Sinners in *his stead*, to be reconcil'd to GOD & accept of Deliverance ; How fitting is it, that they be receiv'd and entertain'd according to the glorious design of their *sanctified* Office and Employment ? Also, that they be both in their Ministry, & Life *beautiful* in the Eyes of God and Man. And surely, there is no one Qualification, which can render them *more so*, than that which is the Ornament and Glory of our Nature, (viz.) an undissembl'd and effectual Piety, which is most becoming a Minister of CHRIST, and as necessary to render him a good one.

To the R E A D E R.

Accordingly when our *Reverend Author* on a late solemn Occasion, enter'd upon the Description of a *Good Minister* of JESUS CHRIST, it was a peculiar Pleasure to us to hear him begin with this *main stroke* in his Character, which being a first rate qualification, does justly challenge our first tho't & regard; either, when we would form a true Conception of, or, take on us the Character of *such an one*.

Now, as in the following *Sermon*, you will see his *Character* is well drawn in all the Parts of it, with lively Colours, & all set in a proper Situation & due Light, to give one the just *Idea* of what is intended by the *entire draught*; so, I doubt not but the Author's very *method* of proceeding *herein*, will afford you the same Pleasure, as it did those who were present at the first Exhibition of it, and, for those that heard him, I may say with equal Truth and Innocence, that our Ears were soon & sweetly chain'd to his Lips, & as the *Preacher* went on, our *Pleasure* rose, & chiefly from the *profit*, we imagin'd ourselves to be receiving; And, I can't but think, that as you read, *Yours* will do so too, for the *same Reason*. If the importance & weightiness of the Subject, propriety of the Matter, close connection of the Parts, unaffected Eloquence and easiness of Style, together with the Ingenuity & strain of Piety, discovered in the whole Composition, do carry any Recommendation with them, surely *this Sermon* will not fail of your acceptance and entertainment.

Herein, you will find him *beginning with the one thing needful*, eminently needful in a *good Minister*, (*viz*) that he be sincerely a *good Man*, which is so clearly & movingly argued, that one wou'd scarcely dare to enter into the Ministry, without some comfortable Evidence of his true Piety —. And then you'll observe him *proceeding* with much care and art to draw the rest of his lovely Character; therein placing that *Excellent Knowledge & Industry*

Still

Still to
must g
in all t
dence to
that co
for His
Him fo
finish th
JESUS
be no fr
of a goo
the grea
and the
suffici
jected S
time wi
Langua
Triumph
tance an
often to
is of GO
more W
humbly
concern
which v
all thei
Qualific
any who
ignoranc
the thin
ful in th
of their
py in th
While
neral use
proveme
as a fairh

It was

To the R E A D E R.

still to improve — those *high & holy views*, which must govern in the Undertaking, and that *Fidelity* in all the parts of the Service, that *Courage & Prudence* to be displayed and blended on all Occasions, that *constant Prayerfulness*, *Dependence* on GOD, for His Influence and Blessing, and *Thankfulness* to Him for all Success given, which justly go in, to finish the Character of an accomplish'd Minister of JESUS CHRIST —. By all which it appears to be no small matter to acquire the needful Furniture of a good Minister, nor an easy thing to perform the great & extensive Work belonging to his Office; and the excelling Apostle himself has said, *Who is sufficient for these things?* and that not from a dejected Spirit and discourag'd Frame; for, at that time when he breaks out in this self-emptying Language, he was elevated into a proper Frame to *Triumph in CHRIST*, and *thank GOD* for acceptance and Success in His Service —. It is good often to think and realize it, that *all our Sufficiency is of GOD*, for the more we live upon GOD, the more Work shall we do for Him; and all, the more humbly and chearfully. Above all men, it both concerns and becomes *Ministers* to live by *Faith*, which will not fail to have a good Influence into all their Work, as well as to brighten all their Qualifications for it —. And Oh how awful, that any who sustain the Character of *such*, shou'd thro' ignorance of themselves, and want of experience in the things of GOD, prove but unskilful & unfaithful in their Work, & so sink below the great Ends of their Ministry, neither be useful in this, nor happy in the World to come!

While the following *Discourse* is adapted for general use to all, I wish it may have a special Improvement by the Ministers, & be receiv'd by them as a faithful Remembrancer of their Duty & Danger.

It was (I'm sure) very agreeable to us, that the
Reverend

To the *R E A D E R.*

Reverend Author was perswaded so far into the *Country* to oblige his friend, and serve the common Interest of *CHRIST*, whereby we had such a specimen and taste of his excellent Gifts; and if there hadn't been such a *Motive* from *special Friendship* to have led the way to his Invitation the knowledge of his *particular Genius* for such a *Service* might have been sufficient hereunto. And I can't but hope the Good which has been, & may be done hereby, will abundantly answer all his cost & pains in the performing it.

And now the Readiness wherewith we testify our Esteem of and Joy in his Labors among us, is equal to the Expectations wherewith we came to receive them. But I'm sorry the Introduction hereof is no more agreeable to the Performance, & nothing cou'd have perswaded me to have undertaken it, but the urgent desire of the Author, and the sense of Gratitude due to him for his Service among us.

May this Sermon which was so particularly design'd for, and directed to our *Worthy Brother*, be a constant direction & help to him in the course of his Life and Ministry; and the People over which he is made an *overseer* find him indeed a *good Minister of JESUS CHRIST*, & their Bereavement in the Death of their former Pastor. [the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Ruffel*,] abundantly made up in this his Servant, whom GOD continue long a rich Blessing unto 'em.

And may the Author of this excellent Discourse, yet continue long in the House of GOD, a *burning and shining Light*, be abundantly Blessed, & more and more priz'd in his more particular sphere of Labors at Home, and yet grow in his extensive Usefulness Abroad; and may the good Fruits of this as well as other his Services, yield him much Comfort in this World, and also be found a notable article at last among his good Deeds; and add a weight to his Crown of Glory in the World of Recompenſe.

Norwich, May
25th. 1733.

Benjamin Lord.

If the
of
Mi

T

our Sav
Instru
should
thod t
forth to
called t
cension,
be expe
an abort
xv. 8.)

The Good Minister.

I TIMOTHY IV. 6.

*If thou put the brethren in remembrance
of these things, thou shalt be a Good
Minister of Jesus Christ*

THough the Apostle *Paul* had not been prepar'd for the Ministry as the rest of the *Apostles* were, who personally convers'd with our *Saviour*, heard him Preach, and received Instructions from His own Mouth how they should behave themselves, and in what method they must proceed when they went forth to Preach the Gospel (for he was not called to be an Apostle till after Christ's Ascension, when no such Advantages were to be expected, which made him stile himself an abortive, or one born out of due time, 1 Cor. xv. 8.) Yet being in a sudden and extraordinary

B

dinary

dinary manner Converted, & furnished with great Gifts and Graces, and having his holy heart inflam'd with heavenly zeal, and fill'd with earnest desires after the happiness and everlasting welfare of precious Souls, he vigorously set himself to win over perishing sinners to CHRIST, *Preaching the word in season, and out of season; teaching persons both publickly, and from house to house, and warning every one within his reach night and day with tears* †: And in a word, performing all the Duties of the Ministerial Office, with so much diligence, application and faithfulness, that he not only equal'd, but went far beyond the rest of the *Apostles, labouring more abundantly than they all*, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

The Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is chiefly taken up in giving an account of the labours and travels of this Apostle, informs us of the spreading the Gospel thro' many Countries and Provinces, among Barbarous as well as Civiliz'd People: And the Churches which he planted in those Places he afterward visited, watering the Seed which he had sown, and further building them up in the most holy faith. And besides all this, he wrote considerable; many ex-

† Acts xx. 20, 31.

cellent *Epistles*, full of heavenly Doctrine, holy Instructions, and the most engaging powerful Motives to a Good Life in general, and to the conscientious and steady practice of all these particular Duties which are required of Persons in their several ranks and stations. Some of these are directed to Churches, others to particular Persons; as one to *Titus*, another to *Philemon*, and two to *Timothy*; which are supposed to have been written in the same Order that I have mention'd them, except the first to *Timothy*, which was wrote the first of the four, and several years before the Apostle's second *Epistle* to him, which is tho't to be the last he wrote.

Timothy was a person for whom this great Apostle had an extraordinary kindness and dear love. He had been the Instrument of his Conversion, as some think; tho' others, with far greater probability, suppose that he was converted before, and that the Apostle when he took him into his acquaintance more thoroughly instructed him in the Christian Faith, building upon the good Foundation which had been lay'd in the vertuous Education his godly Mother and Grand-Mother gave him. He was a very ingenuous Young Man, an excellent Minister, and the Apostle's Assistant in many Places where he Preach'd, always serving with him

in the Gospel, as a Son with a Father, || This renowned *Apostle*, as was said before, had planted *Churches* in many places where he had preached, and among the rest one at *Ephesus* the Metropolis of the lesser *Asia*, afterward one of the famous *Seven* to whom *St. John* wrote an *Epistle*, *Rev. ii. 1.* And here *Timothy* was when the *Epistle* from whence I have taken my *Text* was written; in which the *Apostle* instructs him in the several Duties belonging to his Office, and how he ought to behave himself in the House of GOD, which is the Church of the living GOD, the pillar and ground of the Truth, *1 Tim. iii. 15.* *Austin* says, that those who design to serve the Church, ought always to have before them the two *Epistles* to *Timothy*, with that to *Titus*, which all teach how the Ministers of the Gospel are to behave themselves.

The parts of this *Epistle* (one observes †) are answerable to the eminent Parts and Gifts of the Author, who was both an *Apostle*, a *Prophet*, and a *Pastor* of the Church. In the beginning of the Chapter before us he acts the part of a *Prophet*, foretelling the woful *Apostacy* of some in the latter days, who would make ship-wreck of faith, and embrace damnable Doctrines,

|| *Philip. ii. 22.* † *Featly.*

Ver.

Ver. that in the fa doctrine having Forbide from m with, of it, a all und Faith, Teach destruc whole, that if it his b inculca he had approve convinc Ministe brance of nister of In which 1. He 2. He which he fully per

Ver. 1, 2, 3. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils : Speaking lies in hypocrisie, having their conscience seared with an hot iron : Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c. This he acquaints Timothy with, that he might forewarn the Church of it, and use his best endeavours to engage all under his Care to continue stedfast in the Faith, and not at any time to listen to false Teachers, and imbibe their dangerous and destructive Principles. And then upon the whole, he assures him for his encouragement, that if he were careful of his Duty, & made it his business as there should be occasion, to inculcate upon his People the things which he had laid before him, he would thereby approve himself to *CHRIST*, and give a convincing evidence of his being a faithful Minister : If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a Good Minister of Jesus Christ.

In which Words two things are observable,

1. Here's Timothy's Duty suggested.
2. Here's the happy Character declared, which he would intitle himself to by faithfully performing it.

1. Here's

1. Here's *Timothy's Duty* suggest^d. He must be a remembrancer to those under his Care; *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things*; intimating, that he ought to do it, 'twas what his Office more peculiarly oblig'd him to. But what were the things that he must put them in remembrance of? The *Apostle* indeed seems to point him more directly to what he had just before said concerning the Apostacy of some in the latter days, and the corrupt and mischievous Doctrines which seducing Teachers would advance and endeavour to propagate; But tho' these were material things, and well deserv'd to be particularly recommended to the attentive consideration of the Brethren, that they might guard themselves accordingly, and leave it as a charge upon those that should come after them to exercise the same Care; yet his Duty was not so confin'd and limited, as that the putting them in remembrance only of these things comprehended the whole of it, and nothing more was expected from him; there were other things mentioned by the *Apostle* in the preceding Chapters that they needed to be told of, and which *Timothy* was equally oblig'd to inculcate upon them; yea, he must declare all the counsel of GOD, and instruct the People of his Charge in the whole circle of their

their I
make fu

2. H
which h
faithful
in reme

A GOO

Timothy

nister be

rant of

i Cor. i

LORD;

LORD a

So that

were ca

brance of

about, he

CHRIST,

ently so

Motive a

to put hi

up the gif

ostle spe

no confid

tendency

engage

performi

this.

But th

the Wor

their Duty, if he would be faithful, and make full proof of his Ministry.

2. Here's the happy Character declared, which he would intitle himself to by being faithful in his Office: *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be* A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Timothy had acquitted himself well as a Minister before, and the Apostle was not ignorant of it, for he declares concerning him, 1 Cor. iv. 17. that he was faithful in the LORD; and that he worked the work of the LORD as he himself did, chap xvi. ver. 10. So that when he here tells him, that if he were careful to put the brethren in remembrance of the things which he wrote to him about, he should be a Good Minister of JESUS CHRIST, he means that he would be eminently so: 'Tis therefore spoken by way of Motive and Encouragement, and with design to put him in remembrance, that he might stir up the gift of GOD which was in him, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 6. For he knew of no consideration that would have a greater tendency, or more powerful influence, to engage him vigorously to exert himself in performing the Duties of his Office than this.

But the Doctrine that I shall observe from the Words, is this, viz,

DOCT-

DOCTRINE,

That 'tis the Duty, and should be the great Endeavour of those who undertake the Pastoral Office, to approve themselves Good Ministers of JESUS CHRIST.

I shall not now take up the time in proving to you that GOD has appointed an Order of Men in his Church, whose Office and peculiar Business it is to watch for Souls, to teach men what is necessary for them to know believe, and do, in order to their being forever happy in another World. This is a Point set in so clear a light in the Holy Scripture, and so generally acknowledged, that I shall take it for a Truth that none will dispute, who own the Scripture to be the only Rule of Faith and Practice. Nor shall I particularly show, what Obligation lies upon those of the Sacred Function, both in point of Duty and Interest, to be faithful in discharging the great Trust reposed in them. They have a weighty Charge committed to them, and a strict Account shortly to give how they behaved in their Office, and performed the Duties of it, and if it then be found that any one Soul has perished thro' their neglect, the blood of that Soul will be required at the Watchman's hand; And if such con-

siderations

sidera
heed t
for gr
not b
But
Essay, i
ster.
lead m
contain
speak p
in gene
tions of
his Offis
charging
Discoun
per to b
casion)
them, b
deavoun
racter of
compreh
it will f
tice of.
you are
more tha
main str
to make
over, bec
suffer me
ticularly

considerations as these will not engage us to take heed to our Ministry and fulfil it, none will, for greater and more pungent Motives cannot be tho't of.

But what I have in view, and shall now *Essay*, is to give the Character of a Good Minister. And this undertaking will necessarily lead me to consider the most material things contained in the Text and Doctrine, and to speak particularly of what is there wrapt up in general Terms, namely, Of the Qualifications of a Minister; the Parts and Duties of his Office, and his Fidelity and Diligence in discharging the same. Not that I intend to Discourse on these several Heads (so proper to be consider'd on the present solemn occasion) in the order that I have mention'd them, but promiscuously, or dispersedly; endeavouring, as I go along in giving the Character of a Good Minister, to draw in what is comprehended or implied in them, where it will fall in most naturally to be taken notice of. But the bounds of a single Sermon, you are sensible, will not allow me to do more than only to touch upon some of the main strokes in it; several things requisite to make the Draught compleat must be pass'd over, because the freights of time will not suffer me to name, much less to insist particularly upon them.

C

And

And now where shall I begin? What Particular of the Comprehensive Character of a *Good Minister* shall I first take into Consideration? Let us determine to begin with that which is *the One thing necessary*, and which of all men, those who are Preachers of the Gospel ought to excel in.

1. Then, the *Good Minister* must be a man of true Piety.

The Efficacy & Success of Preaching, depends intirely upon the Divine Blessing: when Paul planted and Apollos watered, it was God gave the Increase, 1 Cor. iii. 6. But now, "the admirable & secret Grace of the Holy Spirit is not usually concomitant with the Ministry of those, who grieve Him, & quench Him in themselves". A Preacher cannot go on with delight and pleasure in his work, nor has he any reason to expect that he shall be Successful in it, who knows he only acts a Part, and is not such a one Himself as he would seem to perswade others to be. His Conscience will often secretly challenge him for his wretched *Hypocrisie*, and force him sometimes to make a pungent Application of those words to himself, Cant. i. 6 *They made me the Keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* He that neglects his own Soul, is not like to take much care of the Souls of Others. God seldom does much by such a Minister;

Minister
better
no Ex
delive
he up
cepted
requir
the Ho
his Sp
drops
therefo
must,
great
of Ver
Barnab
the Hol
accord
So it fo
People u
speakin
this for
Holines
ult. T
House
men, of
they Ex
that 'tis
and free
of like P
Law ma

Minister ; The Church will be but little the better for his Labours. A Preacher that has no Experimental knowlege of the Truths he delivers, seldom much affects others, nor can he upon any good Grounds expect to be accepted of God in his work ; ' He sees and requires the Heart, without which neither the Head nor the Tongue of a Minister, tho' his Speculations are sublime, and his Words drops of Gold, are of any value ". Those therefore who undertake the *Pastoral Care*, must, if they would effectually promote the great Ends of the Gospel Ministry, be men of Vertue and true Goodness. 'Tis said of Barnabas, that he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, & of Faith, Act xi. 24. And accordingly he proved a Successtul Preacher, So it follows in the same Verse, And much People were added unto the Lord. The Apostle speaking of a Bishop's Qualifications, mentions this for one, that he must be Holy, Titus i. 8, Holiness becomes God's House for ever, Ps. xciii. ult. Those therefore who are Officers in his House should be Holy; they ought to be good men, of blameless Lives, and really such as they Exhort and Urge Others to be. Not that 'tis expected Ministers should be Perfect, and free from every failing ; for they are men of like Passions with others, Act. xiv. 15. As the Law made men high-priests which had infirmities,

ties Heb. vii. 28. So under the Gospel-Dispensation, they who *minister about holy things*, and have the Charge of the Souls of Others committed to them, have their *Infirmities* as well as other men : Yet being in so Eminent a Station in the Church, 'tis justly expected they should proportionably excel in the Virtues of a good Life. 'Tis required of Ministers that they be *Examples to believers*, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, 1 Tim. iv. 12. Certainly then, they should be good Men, truly Religious, and Holy in all manner of Conversation. And if they be not so, there are none in the world that have reason to expect a more dreadful Doom, than will be pass'd upon them in the Great Day. Then the Graceless Minister that warned others to beware of the Place of torments, shall be adjudged to go thither Himself, & have the hottest place in Hell assign'd him, as being amongst the number of the worst of Sinners *.

2. A considerable degree of Knowledge is requisite to make a Good Minister.

Those whose Office it is to Instruct others had need be well taught themselves. Our

* The vilest of Creatures is a Wicked man, the vilest of Men is a wicked Christian, and the vilest of them a wicked Minister. *Corruptio Optimi est pessima.* Henry.

Saviour

Saviour
that is
of his t
52. A
sure, a
is to de
To int
whole
nothing
v. 20.
this, is
who ne
of the
a Teac
The ma
all good
with a
both D
keep kno
mouth, M
that wh
Ministe
heart t
which l
those th
found b
to be a
burning

3. T
nished

Saviour compares a Gospel Minister to a man that is an House-holder, which bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old, Mat. xiii. 52. A Minister's furniture should be a Treasure, and a Treasure of things new & old. He is to declare all the Counsel of God, Act. xx. 27. To instruct the People of his Charge in the whole compass of their Duty, and must keep nothing back that may be profitable unto them, v. 20. But how unfit for so great a Work as this, is a raw, ignorant, unskilful Preacher, who needs himself to be instructed in many of the Articles of the Christian Faith? Such a Teacher will be a blind Leader of the blind. The man of God must be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. iii. 17. And therefore with a competent measure of useful Knowledge both Divine & Humane; The Priests lips should keep knowledge, & they should seek the Law at his mouth, Mal ii. 7. And to Speculative Knowledge that which is Experimental must be added. A Minister should feel & experience in his own heart the power and efficacy of the Truths which he Preaches to others, & recommend those things to his Hearers, which he hath found beneficial to Himself, & then he is like to be a Successful Preacher? for "He that is burning in his own breast, will inflame others".

3 The Good Minister, that he may be furnished with Knowledge will be very Studious.

The

The Apostle's Charge to *Timothy*, in the close of the Chapter which contains the Text, is this, *Give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine: Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all, or in all things, as the Margin reads it. The Good Minister will not dare to offer unto God that which cost him nothing: As beaten Oil || was made use of for the Light in the Tabernacle, so the Preparations of those who are to light others to Heaven, should be laboured, and (as we say) smell of the Lamp. Ministers deal in Mysteries; there are Mysteries of Godliness which they must search into & endeavour to unfold; Mysteries of Iniquity (the Wiles & Depths of Satan) which they are to detect & expose; and many perplex'd, intricate and knotty Cases of Conscience to be determin'd; to the performance of all which, much painful Study, close thinking, & serious Meditation are required: Hence Timothy, tho' furnished with Extraordinary & Supernatural Gifts, is exhorted by St. Paul, closely to follow his Studies: How much more then ought those Ministers to do so, who can only expect to acquire Knowledge by industry, diligent search, & earnest Prayer? 'Tis true indeed, *Much study is a weariness of the flesh*, Eccl. xii 12. But this will not discourage the Good*

|| Exod. xxvii. 20.

Minister,

Minis
the p
away

4.
ritual

He
only
be a So
just in
ought t
& mor
makes
Sheep, a
to ente
zardou
of he
of offi
ma e
men wi
arrows,
not tha
Glory
Christ,
after, he
work o
(said O
the Mi
Preache
of God

† 1 Cor.

Minister, who had much rather wear out by the pains that he takes in his Work, than rust away in Sloth and laziness.

4. The Good Minister has *Holy Views & Spiritual Aims* in Undertaking the Cure of Souls.

He does not engage in this Great Work only to get his Living by his Calling, 'tho' it be a *Scripture Canon*, and most reasonable & just in it self, that *He that Preacheth the Gospel ought to Live of the Gospel* †; But for higher & more noble Ends. 'Tis Love to Christ that makes him willing to undertake to feed his Sheep, and Love to Souls that prevails with him to enter upon a Service so very awful & hazardous, & in the faithful discharging whereof he must expect to meet with a great deal of difficulty, opposition & reproach; to be made the common Mark at which wicked men will chiefly Aim, and always shoot their arrows, even bitter words ||. So that were it not that he is earnestly desirous of bringing Glory to God's Name by winning Souls to Christ, whose salvation & happiness he thirsts after, he could never think of engaging in the work of the Ministry. *I seriously Profess it* (said One * who was then but a Candidate for the Ministry, but afterward an Excellent Preacher, and great Ornament to the Church of God) *if I could foresee that my Ministry*

† 1 Cor. v. 14. || Psal. lxiv. 3. * Mr. Mat. Henry.
would

would be wholly Unprofitable, and that I should be no Instrument of good to Souls, tho' in other respects I might get enough by it, I would rather beg my Bread from door to door, than undertake this Great Work

5 Faithfulness is another, and a main Stroke in the Character of a Good Minister.

The Apostle Paul gave Timothy a great deal of good Advice concerning the management of himself in his Office, & among other things to this purpose, he directs him about Ordaining Persons that were to be Employed in the work of the Ministry, charging him to take special care to commit that great Trust to men of approved Fidelity, 2 Tim. ii. 2. *The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to Faithful men. Ministers are Stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God: A great Trust is lodged in their hands, and therefore as it follows in the next verse, It is required in Stewards that a man be found faithful. And this Character is given to Epaphras §, and Tychicus †, both Ministers. And the Apostle Paul Thanks Christ Jesus, for that He counted him Faithful, putting him into the ministry, 1 Tim. i. 12 If men in Posts of Civil Trust prove unfaithful, the Damage that accrues thereby to*

§ Col. i. 7. † Col. iv. 7.

the St
confid
Peopl
much
as the
and E
more
And
Faithf
will le
Minist
(1)
Preach
This
Part o
lemn A
Belove
the Lor
& the
Preach
season;
suffering
that wo
perform
Business
son; A
Preach
not the
great S
mons, v

the State, or particular Persons, is often very considerable ; but unfaithful Ministers hurt People in their *spiritual Interests*, which are as much more valuable than their Civil Rights, as the *Soul* is more precious than the *Body*, and *Eternal* things of greater importance & more deep Concernment than *Temporal*.

And here I shall shew, Wherein *Ministerial Faithfulness* ought to Express it self, Which will lead me to touch upon the *Parts* of a *Ministers Work*.

(1) The Good Minister will be Faithful in *Preaching the Word*.

This is a great & necessary, yea, an essential Part of a Ministers Duty : Hence is that solemn Adjuration of the Apostle Paul to his Beloved Timothy, I Charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall Judge the Quick & the Dead at his appearing and his Kingdom ; Preach the Word : Be instant in season, out of season ; Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort with all long-suffering & doctrine, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Those that would approve themselves to God in performing this Holy Service, must make a Business of it, be instant in season, & out of season ; And they must Preach the Word, must Preach Christ, & not themselves, the Gospel, & not their own Notions. That which was the great Subject of all the Apostle Paul's Sermons, will be likewise the main Argument

D

that

that the Faithful Minister will insist upon, viz. Repentance towards God, & Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ *. He will endeavour by way of Remembrance to stir up pure minds, and to revive the things which the People of his Charge have received & heard and been often instructed in. "Preaching is not design'd to teach us something New in every Sermon, something that we knew nothing of before, but to put us in Remembrance, to call to mind things forgotten, to affect our Passions, & engage & fix our Resolutions, that our Lives may be answerable to our Faith". Preachers should "beware of that vain affectation of finding something new & strange in every Text, tho' never so plain. It will not so much shew their Parts (which such men aim at) as their Pride & wantonness of Wit".

Ministers ought to use plainness of speech in their Sermons, not affecting lofty Expressions new Phrases, or the enticing words of mans wisdom. A fine flourish of Words, & flurys of Wit, are but sorry Embellishments of a Sermon, no ways profitable, nor becoming a Preacher of the Gospel, and will yield but little comfort upon a serious reflection. The Prophet is commanded to write the Vision, & make it Plain, that he may run that reads it, Hab. ii. 2. Most of our Hearers need Plain Discour-

* Act. xx. 21.

ses,
'Tw
ente
Not
fore
his P
lified
Husk
ador
whic
of the
poor
be (e
were
Tongu
And
some
with
Th
ing th
Sermon
People
lick E
ceive
Debt
So if a
care t
he wi
most
Truth

ses, & will receive little benefit by any other. 'Twill be a shooting over their Heads, to entertain them with *Sermons* fill'd with lofty Notions & curious Speculations, Such therefore a Faithful Minister will not prepare for his People, how well soever he may be qualified for it. This were to feed them with *Husks* instead of wholesome Meat. A *Sermon* adorned with the flowers of Rhetorick, and which only discovers the Profound Learning of the Preacher, will signify very little to a poor ignorant Hearer, who rather needs to be fed with *Milk*, than strong Meat. This were in effect to speak to him in an unknown Tongue, for he understands not what he hears; And yet, for what good reason I know not, some weak People seem to be greatly pleas'd with such Discourses.

The Good Minister will therefore in Preaching the Word, faithfully endeavour to adapt his *Sermons* to the Capacity & Circumstances of his People. He will labour so to frame his Publick Discourses, as that the Ignorant may receive Instruction, remembering that he is a Debtor to the Unwise, as well as to the Wise. So if any are leavened with Error, he will take care to set them right; And to this purpose he will explain & prove in the clearest and most convincing manner that he can those Truths, that they oppose, shew how ground-

less and Unscriptural their Opinions are. And he will have an Eye too, to those who are Unsettled and *Wavering* in Religion, and in the course of his Ministry, lay before them such Considerations and Arguments drawn from the Word of God, as have a tendency to *Establish* them in the Truth: To the *Distressed Christian*, from whom God *hides his Face*, he will Preach Comfort; insisting on the *Promises of the Gospel*, and letting him see what a good Title he has to them, and how much 'tis his Duty to apply them to himself, and take Comfort in them. Thus must he *declare all the Counsel of God*, and keep nothing back that may be profitable to his Hearers. He must not handle the Word of God deceitfully, 2 Cor. iv. 2

Finally, The Good Minister will be in Earnest in his Preaching, will deliver his Sermons with Zeal, Life, and Affection, as one that believes himself the Truths which he would persuade others to believe. A cold Preacher will soon have a cold Auditory. Thus we have seen something of a Ministers Duty with reference to *Preaching the Word*, & how he ought to manage this Part of his Work.

(2) In Administering the *Seals of the Covenant*, which is another Part of a Minister's Work, Faithfulness is required.

The Doors of the Church should not be opened so wide as to let in the Prophane, nor shut

shut
sober
that
on, is
denly
unfit,
Table o
Ministr
appoin
Church
trust, a
to the
be Cloa
is Bapt
ministr
Profess
Him.
nefit o
amined
sign &
& prop
of the
less un
should
to live
going t
thers, by
ation
(2) I
s also
shut

shut so close as to exclude those that are sober & of good Conversation. Every one that offers to come to the Holy Communion, is not to be received, at least not suddenly; for sometimes those who are very unfit, in several respects, to be Guests at the *Table of the Lord*, seek to be admitted to it. Ministers are Christ's Servants, and He hath appointed them to guard the Doors of his Church, and they must be *Faithful* to their trust, and not knowingly suffer any to come to the *Marriage Feast*, who do not appear to be Cloathed with the *Wedding Garment*. Nor is *Baptism* (the Initiating Seal) to be Administred to those who are Adult, till they *Profess their Faith in Christ, and Obedience to Him*. Such as are desirous to have the benefit of these *Ordinances*, should be duly Examined, well instructed in the Nature, Design & End of them, have suitable Counsels & proper Directions given them; be warned of the Danger of attending them in a careless unprepared manner. And *in fine*, They should with much seriousness be Exhorted to live answerable to the Profession they are going to make, and labour to *shine before Quakers*, by an holy Walk and Gospel Conversation

(3) The Management of Church-Discipline, is also a Work belonging to the *Pastoral Office*,

Office, and will give the *Good Minister* opportunity to discover his *Faithfulness*.

As *Disorderly Walkers* are to be dealt with in *Private* and Reprov'd for their *Miscarriages*; so when the Case requires it, in *Public* also: *Them that sin Rebuke before all*, is an Apostolick Canon †. And if after due *Admonition* they still remain *Impenitent*, and refuse to make a satisfactory *Acknowledgement* of their fault, they are to be *Rejected*, as Persons *Unmeet* for Church Communion, and not to be *Restored* till they give some good Evidence of their Repentance.

But then, the *Good Minister* will take care to manage this unpleasant part of his Work, as with *Faithfulness*, so likewise with the utmost Prudence and Impartiality, always observing the Rules which the Word of God prescribes in cases of Scandal and Offence, & keeping close to them, doing nothing but what may be justified at the Bar of Scripture, and then he is safe, and may be eased whatever censures disaffected persons shall pass upon his Proceedings.

(4) And *Lastly*; Another Part of a Minister's work, and in the performance whereof *Faithfulness* is required, is to *Inspect the Flock committed to his Charge*.

† 1 Tim. v. 20.

Visiting our People is a great & necessary Duty. This should be done frequently, and a Business made of it, and then in all probability it will turn to a good account. By this means a Minister will come to *know the state of his Flock*, more fully than otherwise he can pretend to, and will have opportunity to apply himself to every one more particularly and closely than it may be convenient for him to do in *Public*. If there be any under his Charge that are infected with Error, that walk disorderly, that live in the neglect of *Family Prayer, God's Public Worship, and the Sacraments*; Or, if any be grossly Ignorant, Tempted, Melancholy, or in Despairing Circumstances; he may in the Course of his *Visiting* find them out, and Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort, Counsel, Instruct & Comfort them as there shall be occasion. In a word, Such & so great are the Advantages that may be reasonably expected from a Minister's *Visiting his Charge*, and so probable a prospect is there of his benefitting his People not a little this way, that it is hard to understand how any Minister can think himself Safe, & that he duly discharges his Duty towards those under his Care, who lives in the neglect of it, and rarely sees his People otherwise than in the *Pulpit*.

But

But among others in the Flock, the *Sick* should have a more peculiar notice taken of them. When persons apprehend themselves to be upon the borders of an Eternal World, they are thoughtful & serious, if they were never so before; and then *Pastoral Visits* will be more especially Seasonable, and usually are very welcome. And in performing this part of his work also, it is required of a Minister that he *be found faithful*. Indeed, we who are so often called to attend *Sick Beds*, are under great Temptation, when we see Dying Persons in distress, to forbear speaking what may aggravate their trouble, tho' necessary for them to hear; Yet we must beware of sowing pillows under the Arms of the *Sick & Dying*, and healing their Wounds slightly, lest we thereby ruin their Souls, and become guilty of their Blood. Not that persons in such Circumstances should be dealt with in a rigorous manner; No, let them be treated with a great deal of tenderness & compassion, but at the same time let nothing be offer'd that may cause them to think their Condition better than really it is, because this may prove of fatal Consequence. Thus have I shewn in several particulars, wherein *Ministerial Faithfulness* ought to express it self, and so dispatch'd the *Fifth Head*. I now go on to say in the

6. Place

6.
of Cou
In
no M
faith
loins,
Comm
lest I c
nisters
Apost
Epist.
a good
siers h
to def
wicke
brunt
hearte
destitu
and rea
prehen
sure of
is inspir
Courage
comes
for the
loose th
7. A
Good M
It wa
ples, wh

6. Place, The *Good Minister* must be a man of *Courage*.

In doing his *Duty*, he will fear the face of no Man, nor should he. Hear what God saith to the *Prophet*; *Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I Command thee: Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them*, Jer i. 17. Ministers are in Scripture stiled *Soldiers*; the *Apostle Paul* calls *Archippus* his *Fellow-soldier*, *Epist. to Philemon*, v. 2. Now 'tis essential to a good *Soldier* that he be *Courageous*. Ministers have the assaulted Truths of Religion to defend, the Malice & Rage of Satan & wicked Men to encounter with, & bear the brunt of; and are the Timorous and faint-hearted fit for such Service? The Minister destitute of *Courage*, will be apt to be partial, and ready to baulk his *Duty* when he is apprehensive that he shall incur the displeasure of others by doing it: Whereas he that is inspired with a Principle of true Christian *Courage*, and such a fortitude of spirit as becomes his *Post*, will venture to displease men for their good, knowing it to be far better to loose the smiles than the Souls of his People.

7. Another stroke in the Character of a *Good Minister* is *Prudence*.

It was our Saviour's Counsel to his Disciples, when sending them forth to Preach the Gospel,

E

Gospel,

Place

Gospel, *Be ye wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. *Prudence* is a very necessary Qualification in a *Good Minister*, and when 'tis join'd with *Courage*, there's a Prospect of that Person's being greatly Serviceable to the Interest of Religion & the Souls of men. I have not time now to enumerate the several things about which a Minister should exercise his *Prudence*; It shall suffice to say in *General*, that *Prudence* will direct him to manage all the Parts and Duties of his Office in the most cautious, wary and unexceptionable manner that he can, and not be *Unfaithful*, or betray his Trust.

8. The Good Minister will be very Prayerful.

Those who are in the Ministry should above all Men abound in the Duty of *Prayer*; See what their Resolution was, & no doubt they practised accordingly, Act. vi. 4. *But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* We want Ministerial Gifts, and Ministerial Graces; we need Direction, Encouragement & Assistance in our Work, or it will never prosper in our hands; all which we must humbly & earnestly ask of God, and 'twill be pleasing to Him if we do it. In this way Ministers should often carry their *Own Cases*, and the *Cases of their Flocks* before the Lord, beseeching Him to make all their *People* truly Religious,

ligious
New T
sonabl
what
make t
Minist
hope t
often c
earnest
for him
with all
And FC
unto M
make kn
30. Non
Jesus Ch
that you
to God fo
for us, t
course, a
he was
for Him
He did
9. An
irely de
his Labo
God all
hem.
Preach
oth as t

religious, and *Themselves able Ministers of the New Testament*: Nor can those Ministers reasonably expect to be accepted of God in what they do in their Office, who do not make this their frequent Practice. "That Minister that is not fervent in Prayer, cannot hope to be Successful in Preaching". How often did the Apostle Paul (and with what earnestness) bespeak the Prayers of Others for himself? Eph. vi. 18, 19. *Praying always with all Prayer, -- and Supplication for all Saints; And FOR ME, that Utterance may be given unto Me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel.* Rom. xv. 30. Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me, in your Prayers to God for me. And 2Thes. iii. 1. Brethren, Pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified ---. And surely, when he was so importunate with Others to Pray for Him, and for a Blessing upon his Labours, He did not forget to Pray for Himself.

9. And Lastly, The Good Minister will indirectly depend on the Divine Blessing to make his Labours effectual, and be careful to give God all the Glory of the Success he has in them.

Preachers may compose Excellent Sermons both as to *Matter & Method*, & Deliver them

in the best manner, and yet after all they will have no effect, will be but *as water spilt upon the Ground, or seed sown on a Rock*, if God do not accompany them to the Hearers heart with his Blessing. And this the *Good Minister* is abundantly sensible of; and therefore, as he looks up to God for Assistance in his Work, so when he is *Successful* in it, he takes none of the Praise of it to Himself, but attributes all to God, looking upon himself only as an unworthy Instrument in His hand, that He is pleased to make use of in *Espousing Souls to Christ*. The Apostle *Paul* is an Eminent Pattern to Ministers in this respect (as in all others) who speaking of his *labouring more abundantly* than the rest of the *Apostles*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. immediately adds in the same Verse, *Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me*. So Chap. iii. v. 5, 6. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom y: believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase*. The most accomplish'd Ministers are nothing, & can do nothing of themselves, and the *Good Minister* is always most ready to acknowledge this concerning himself; And therefore when God is pleased at any time to bless his Labours & make them *Successful*, he is free to ascribe all the Praise of it to Him unto whom alone it justly belongs.

Thus

Th
main
but a
from
may
whos
Rem
to the
the B
there
(you
the p
my F
alread
can te
All
which

I. H
are sen
stowed
and fo
The
Flock
Timoth
have n
for you
faithfu
and be
conver/

Thus I have touch'd upon some of the main Strokes in the Character of a good Minister, but am very sensible that the Draught is far from being compleat, yet as it is, I hope it may be useful, especially to the Worthy Person whose Ordination is before us, to put him in Remembrance of his Duty, and to quicken him to the Practice of it, (which as I take it) is the Business of An Ordination Sermon ; and therefore for His sake more peculiarly it is (you may be sure) that I have insisted on the present Argument, and not to Instruct my Fathers or Brethren in the Ministry, who already know their Duty far better than I can tell it them.

All that now remains is the Improvement, which I shall dispatch as briefly as I can.

I. Hence we see, that when Good Ministers are sent among a People, a Great Blessing is bestowed upon them, which they should highly Prize, and for which they should be very Thankful.

The Good Minister will naturally Care for his Flock, as the Apostle Paul tells the Philippians Timothy would for them, Chapt. ii. 20 For I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your State : He will Preach the Word faithfully, watch over his Charge carefully, and be an Example of the Believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,

city *. He will bear with the infirmities of the weak, *be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves* ||. In a word, He will *become all things to all men* that he may gain the more to Christ: Happy is that People who have such *Shepherds* set over them, and that know how to prize them according to their Worth.

On the contrary, how deplorable is the Case of those whose *Spiritual Leaders* cause them to Err, and who by their Example teach them to despise their Doctrine, and harden them in their Sins! 'Tis an heavy Judgment upon a People to have **Ungodly Ministers** set over them, who mind the Fleece more than the Flock †, and concerning whom God says, *They shall not profit them at all*. But faithful & painful Preachers are great Blessings, rich Gifts of our Ascended Saviour to his Church, and should be so esteemed by all that are so happy as to enjoy them. Hence a People in the Choice of a Minister ought to

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. || 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. † Sir Richard Blackmore tells us, That once in Conversation, he asked a *Clergy man*, who exprest & pleaded for **Atheistical** and **Unchristian** Notions, how he, who had espoused such Principles, could continue to officiate as a Preacher and Pastor to a Christian Church? His Answer was, that he did it to get his Living, that he was brought up in that way for his Maintenance.

have

have a special regard to the foremention'd Qualifications, and to fix upon a Person, concerning whom there is great reason to hope that he undertakes the Pastoral Office with pure and spiritual Aims, and will labour to approve himself therein to God, and the Consciences of his People.

II. From what has been said, *We that are Preachers of the Gospel*, may take occasion to *Ask our selves*, Whither in discharging the Duties belonging to our Office, we have approved our selves Good Ministers of Jesus Christ?

Can our own Consciences witness for Us, that we have faithfully done our Duty? Can our People witness for us, that we have carefully watched over *Them*, and taught them from house to house, as well as in the Pulpit? That we have been serviceable to their Souls, and that they have received benefit by our Labours among them, and the good Example we have set before them; or if they have not, that the fault is *their Own*, not *Ours*? Or, on the other hand, must they say, if they speak the truth, that we have greatly neglected our Duty towards them, both in *Public & Private*? We should all labour to avoid such a Charge, by carefully applying our selves to the Work we have undertaken, & faithfully endeavouring to fulfil the Ministry which

*which we have received in the Lord. If we take heed to our selves, & to our Doctrine, & continue in them ||, we shall not after we have preached to others, be cast-aways our selves †. Tho' our faithful endeavours to save Souls from perishing eternally, should after all in a great measure be in vain, and but few of our People be gathered, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord *; And in the Resurrection World our Joy will be compleat & full, and we shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, & as the Stars for ever & ever **.*

III. What has been deliver'd may be of use to put those in Remembrance who are *Entering into the Ministry*, what is the great thing they should aim at in such a Weighty Undertaking; Namely, To approve themselves *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ*.

And this Word, *Dear Sir*, comes near to *your Self*, who are upon the point of stepping into a very solemn Relation, & undertaking an Office which is full both of Duty & Danger. You are presently to take the charge of this Flock of Christ, to feed & watch over it, and must hereafter give an Account of the Souls committed to your Care. In the Discourse now made upon this great Occasion, the *Character & Duty of a Good Minister*

† 1 Tim. iv. 16 † 1 Cor. ix. 27. * Isa. xlix. 5. ** Dan. xii. 3

have

have
for y
be fu
Conce
that y
Diffic
you n
the D
a glori
& Goo
the nu
found
you sh
Promi
may, e
Promi
fort, e
There
Christ
Work
knows
He wil
approv
you to
the gre
it He b
be again
gether
with H

[Mat

At an Ordination.

33

have in some measure been set before You, for your *Excitation & Imitation*. It may well be surprizing to you, & fill you with awful Concern to think how great the Work is that you are going to Engage in, and what Difficulties & Temptations attend it; but you must look upon the Bright as well as the Dark side of things, and remember what a glorious Reward shall be given to *Faithful & Good Ministers* in another World, among the number of which, we hope, you will be found at the Great Day; In the mean time you should often refresh your Self with that Promise of our Saviour, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the world* ||; Which Promise, so full of Encouragement & Comfort, extends to Gospel Ministers in all ages, Therefore *Thank God for it, & take Courage*. Christ will not leave His Ministers to do the Work alone which he calls them to, for He knows that *without Him they can do nothing*. He will, if you are faithful in your Office, and approve your self a *Good Minister*, be with you to Direct, Encourage and Assist you in the great Work you are Undertaking; And if He be with you, and for you, who can be against you? Ministers are *Labourers together with God* †, and 'tis sweet Working with Him. May God fill you with his Holy

† Mat. xxviii. 20. † 1 Cor. iii. 9.

F

Spirit

Spirit, and bestow Ministerial Gifts & Graces upon you in a rich abundance; *May you be very Successful in your Ministry, and have many Seals of it; And in a word, May you be faithful unto Death, and at last be rewarded with a Crown of Life.*

IV. And *Lastly*, What we have heard, should put the *People* as well as *Ministers* upon seriously considering *Their Duty*, and excite them to the faithful Practice of it.

It appears from what has been said, that there is a great deal requir'd of a *Pastor* in respect to his *Flock*; and the *People* of our Charge justly expect that we faithfully perform it all; that we should Watch over them with great Care & Diligence, and in all the Parts and Duties of our Office approve our selves *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ*. But is there nothing required of *Them* with relation to *Us*? Certain it is, that *Ministers* and *People* ought to be Mutual Helpers one of another. 'Tis the *Peoples Duty* to Esteem their *Ministers* very highly in Love for their *Works sake*, to Pray for them, and as much as they can to Assist them in that Difficult Service, which they engage in for the benefit of Others more than for their own private Advantage.

And this Word comes near to You of this Church & Congregation. You are about to put your

your
whom
Sheph
and w
that t
it, tha
wards
have
charge
your
bale t
under
vantage
Preach
from H
any the
fulness
Selves?
liar Ob
be Succ
that yo
happy f
bours a
your R
Preache
count v
Day!
been, if
ours, if
Preachin

your selves under the Watch & Care of One whom you all hope will prove a faithful Shepherd, and good *Minister of Jesus Christ*; and we trust you will not be deceived; And that He may be so indeed, You must see to it, that You be not wanting in your *Duty towards Him*. 'Tis a great Trust that you have to commit into His hands, Not the charge of your worldly Substance, but of your Immortal Souls; and 'tis highly probable that many of you will Live and Die under his Ministry; So that what future *Advantages* you may have by hearing the Word Preached, you are chiefly to expect them from His Labours among You, Are there any then, so nearly concerned, as to his faithfulness & Success in his Work as *You your Selves*? You are therefore under very peculiar Obligations to *Pray* for him. If he shall be *Successful* in his Ministry, this will imply that you are obedient to his Message, & how happy for *You* will that be! But if his Labours among you are in *Vain*, this supposes your Rejection of the Gospel which He Preaches to You, and then what a sad Account will you have to give in the Great Day! How much better would it have been, if *You* had never seen *His face*, nor *He*, *Yours*, if You are not profited at all by His Preaching among You.

Therefore, Brethren, Pray for Him. Pray that when he comes to take the Oversight of you, he may not find you such as he would not, and that he may not be found unto you such as you wou'd not; that there may not be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, swellings, tumults; and that God may not humble him among you †, on the account of any, who tho' guilty of great Sins, shall yet remain impenitent But as Paul the Aged said concerning Young Timothy, See that he may be with you without fear ||; without the prospect or fear of any of these things.

And then, Will you not readily Assist him in his Work in all other ways wherein you are capable of doing it? If at any time you perceive him to be under Discouragement, because he sees not that fruit of his Labours among you which he expected & hop'd for, will you not do all you can to strengthen his hands, and animate him in his Work? Will not some of You, at least, (and why not All?) say to Him as Shechaniab did to Ezra, Arise; for this matter longeth unto thee; We also will be with thee; Be of good courage & do it *; We will be with you, to Assist you to the utmost of our power in your Work, and to Help you as well as we can in carrying it

† 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21. || 1 Cor. xvi. 10. * Ezra x. 4

on.
such
Min
ther
thei
ster,
will
His
A
vidin
giving
ing a
Hou
Ma
shall t
† D
Advan
Succes
at Ked
us, " T
" Dilig
" liv'd
" Neig
" Tow
" seduc
" Conv
" casion
Numbe
Flock,
assist hi
what G
him in

on. Oh! What new Life & Vigour would such an Assurance from a *People* inspire their *Ministers* withal, and how would it engage them to exert themselves in the Service of their Souls? And *such Helpers* of your *Minister*, we hope *You of this Church & Congregation* will be, when *He* shall have received You for His peculiar Charge †.

And now, Blessed be the Lord who is providing rest for His People in *this Place*, and giving them the pleasing Prospect of obtaining a Peaceable & Happy Settlement in His House again.

May this Church be a Church that CHRIST shall take pleasure in; and *may the Worship*

† Dr. Calamy, in the Account he gives of the *Advantageous Circumstances* which promoted the Success of Mr. Baxter's Ministry among his People at *Kedermister* (which was Extraordinary) tells us, " That he was much *assisted* by the Zeal and Diligence of the Godly People among whom he liv'd, who thirsted after the Salvation of their Neighbours; and being dispersed thro' the Town, were ready in all Companies, to suppress seducing words, and to justify Godliness, and to Convince, Reprove & Exhort, as there was Occasion ". And happy is *that Minister* who has a Number of such well-disposed Christians in his Flock, and who will thus strengthen his Hands, & assist him in his Work. 'Tis not easie to imagine what Great Service they may in all probability do him in discharging the Duties of his Office.

of

of God be zealously Upheld, and Gospel Ordinances purely and powerfully Administered Here *for a long time to come.* May He that walks in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, and holds the Stars in His right hand, always be seen walking Here; And May the same Almighty Hand that in the days of Your former Pastor *, laid the Foundation of a Church among You, Build thereon and carry on the Building, till the Top stone be brought forth with Shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it ||.

May this Congregation, and all the Congregations in the Town †, flourish greatly, and pure and undefiled Religion always Visibly appear in the Conversations & Lives of all belonging to them; May they dwell together in Unity, and enjoy abundance of Peace.

May He, whom you are now Expecting will take the Charge of your Souls, at the Hands of Christ, be a Good Minister and Faithful Shepherd; May he be a burning and shining Light in this Candlestick; And may You and Your Children after you long rejoice in His Light.

May those who are still in an Unconverted State, now be Savingly wrought upon, and effectually Perswaded to believe & obey the

* The Rev. Mr. Russel. † Zec. iv. 7. ‡ Which are Three.
Gospel,

Gospel
Preach
an off
longin
hid fr

M
farthe
grow

M
and C
days
May
and S
ness i
may
end,
Crow

An
Tears,
the L
in Ch
in Pea
Blessi
House

Fin
fied e
Multi
rael of
Glory

Gospel, which God is sending His *Servant* to Preach to them ; May they no longer reject an offer'd Saviour, nor neglect *the things belonging to their Peace, lest they should be for ever hid from their Eyes.*

May those who are already Converted, be farther built up in their most holy Faith, daily grow in Grace, and a meetness for Heaven.

May those that are Young begin with God, and Consecrate the prime & flower of their days to the Service of their Great Creator : May they Remember Him in their Early days, and Seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness in the first place ; And having begun well, may they persevere in well-doing to the end, be faithful unto Death, and receive a Crown of Life.

And May those who are far advanced in Years, bring forth fruit in Old Age, to shew that the Lord is upright ; May they finish well, die in Christ, and be gathered to their Fathers in Peace. This is the Mercy, these the Blessings which we wish for you all out of the House of the Lord our God this Day.

Finally ; May God's Word run and be Glorified every where ; May Grace and Mercy be Multiplied unto You, and Peace be on all the Israel of God, and the whole Earth filled with His Glory ; And let all the People say, A M E N.

F I N I S.

...which God is sending his Son to
...to them; that they might be
...the world's Saviour, not only of the
...to the Father, but of the world to be
...from the Father.

And this is the Son of God, who
...the world, and who is
...the world.

And this is the Son of God, who
...the world, and who is
...the world.

And this is the Son of God, who
...the world, and who is
...the world.



And this is the Son of God, who
...the world, and who is
...the world.

F. 1. M. 1. 2.

